

Name: _____

Date: _____

Review dates: _____

PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

The following steps represent *my* plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility for further domestic violence. Although I do not have control, over my partner's violence, I *do* have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get myself and my children to safety.

Step 1: Safety during a violent incident. Victims cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, victims may use a variety of strategies.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- A. If I decide to leave, I will _____.
(I will practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes can I use?)
- B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (place) _____
_____ in order to leave quickly.
- C. I can tell the following people about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home: _____

- D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- E. I will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- F. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____.
(Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)
- If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____
or _____.
- G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.
- H. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____. I will try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.

- I. I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.
- J. I can take self defense classes. (Information regarding classes is usually available through the police departments, community centers or local colleges.)
- K. I will call ahead and verify that my 911 system is in place. I will verify that the law enforcement agencies have the exact locations and directions to my residence. If my home is difficult to locate from the street, I will apply reflective color to my mail box or make sure my street number can be seen more clearly. I will call and verify the same for my place of employment if applicable.

Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave. Victims frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe that a victim is leaving a relationship.

I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

- A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
- B. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.
(If taking original documents may arouse the suspicion of my batterer, I can make photo copies and keep them with a trusted friend or in a safety deposit box at a bank.)
- C. I will open a savings or checking account in my name by _____, to increase my independence.
- D. I will obtain a personal loan in my name to establish credit.
- E. I will obtain a credit card in my own name to establish credit. (I should try to have one to use in emergency situations and at least two gas cards with one that pays for car repairs at a service station.)
- F. I will locate all papers regarding insurance coverage of my residence, cars and family's health so that I can understand them. I will look into the cash value of the life insurance policy and get a better understanding of any pension/retirement plan.
- G. I will make an inventory of all assets and liabilities. (I know that accounts listing names separated by "or" are joint and that accounts listing names by "and" require two signatures.
- H. I will get my own post office box. When I am ready, I will begin forwarding my mail.
- I. I will establish my own transportation by _____.

- J. The local domestic violence program's hotline number is _____. I can seek emergency shelter or information on available outreach services by calling this hotline.
- K. I will be cautious about keeping any information about crisis intervention agencies, hotlines, shelters, or counseling dealing with domestic violence (brochures, pamphlets, business cards, etc.) at my residence. My batterer may become upset upon finding any of this information that may indicate that I plan to leave the relationship. He/she may attempt to prevent my leaving or retaliate against me.
- L. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times or I can purchase a telephone calling card. I understand that if I use my telephone *credit* card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my batterer those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or a telephone *calling* card. I may also get a friend to permit me to use his/her telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave. I understand that it is important to be careful when I use mobile phones as well. Calls made on cellular phones can be traced to specific cell towers to establish location of caller.
- M. If I share my home with my batterer, I will be careful to use my telephone or computer knowing that my batterer can use technology to find out where I placed phone calls and what sites I am visiting on the Internet.
- N. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
- O. I can leave extra clothes and personal items with/at _____. I can also rent a locker at a bus station, train terminal, or airport if needed. I may start scouting around for a safe storage facility.
- P. Other things I can do increase my independence include: _____
- Q. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____ (domestic violence advocate or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.
- R. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.
- S. If I have pets and animals in my care, I will make plans for them to be placed with others I trust to care for them if I am unable to bring them with me. (The local domestic violence program may have an agreement with another agency to offer foster care.)
- S. I will be careful in keeping any paper trail I have begun in documenting the abuse in my relationship by taking photos of my injuries and collecting written observations from medical professionals when I seek health care. I can talk with people who are safe about the abuse that they have witnessed or the injuries they observed about helping me later on if I choose to use the legal system in pursuing future safety measures. I understand that if I do choose to use the legal system, these things are very important to create a paper trail particularly if I am not reporting the abuse to police.

Step 3: Safety in my own residence. If my partner leaves or is forced to leave or I have to seek a new location, I may find myself alone with different safety concerns. There are many things that victims can do to increase safety at home. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

Safety measures I can use include:

- A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible. Local law enforcement can perform a security check or a walk-through free of charge to help secure the residence.
- B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc. Window locks can be purchased at low cost at hardware or home improvement stores. Inexpensive door alarms that make a piercing beeping noise can be purchased at stores that sell electronic equipment.
- D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my home (motion detectors).
- G. I will look into changing the ignition and/or door locks on my vehicles.
- H. I can make use of a cellular phone to increase my safety when traveling to and from home or work. I can call area businesses to see what the monthly costs would be for a basic service plan.
- I. I can carry a portable phone when walking outside around my home to my vehicle, when getting my mail, walking my dog or answering the door.
- J. I can purchase an answering machine or use voice mail to screen my calls. I can also use a tape recorder or phone recording equipment to record communication from my batter. This equipment can be used from stores which sell electronic equipment. I can make use of the Caller ID service offered by the phone company as well as other options such as call tracing and last phone contact call-back to assist police in filing charges if I choose to do so.
- K. I will seek legal consultation in receiving information regarding options in using the legal system to maintain safety in my residence. Such measures may include seeking a protective order, finding out what my rights when my batterer breaks the terms of his/her probation or parole, and obtaining a criminal trespass order. I will seek legal advice about property issues and if I have children, information about how to establish custody, visitation and child support.

- L. I can inform _____ (neighbor), _____ (clergy), and _____ (friend) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if my partner is observed near my residence.

Step 4: Safety with a protective order. Many batterers obey protection orders, but some do not. I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protective order.

The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protective order:

- A. I will keep my protective order _____ (location). (Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses, it is the first thing that should go in. Keep a copy near your front door of your home, at work, in your glove compartment of your vehicle, etc.)
- B. I will give copies of my protective order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live. There should be a registry of protective orders that all police departments can call to confirm a protective order. I can check to make sure that my order is in the registry.
- C. For further safety, if I often visit other counties, I might file my protective order with the law enforcement agencies in those areas as the protective order is supposed to be enforced in each and every county in the State of Texas. As a precaution, I will submit copies of my protective order to the law enforcement agencies in the following court counties: _____, _____, and _____.
- D. I can call the local domestic violence program or the office of the prosecutor or attorney who represented me in my protective order petition, if I am not sure about B or C above or if I have some problem with my protective order.
- E. I will inform my employer, my religious leader, my closest friend and _____ and _____ that I have a protective order in effect. I may also want to supply them copies as well.
- F. If my partner destroys my protective order, I can get another copy from the courthouse by going to the Office of the county or district clerk located at _____.
- G. If my partner violates the protective order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation by contacting the prosecuting attorney handling the case or the county victim assistance coordinator. I can report ANY violation. I will follow-up to make sure that each incident is documented.
- H. If the police do not help me in a time of crisis or refuse to respond to a violation of my protective order, I can contact my advocate, the county victim assistance coordinator, or the attorney or prosecutor who handled my case and will file a complaint with the chief of the police department.

- I. I can contact s supervising officer of the law enforcement agency that failed to respond in order to file a criminal complaint of the violation that occurred or with the prosecutor's office. I can charge my battering partner with a violation of the protection order and all the crimes that he/she commits in violating the order. I can call the domestic violence advocate or county victim assistance coordinator to help me with this.

Step 5: Safety on the job and in public. Victims must decide if and when to tell others about their experience as a victim of domestic violence and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect victims. Victims should consider carefully which people to invite to help secure safety.

I might do any or all of the following:

- A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and _____ at work of my situation.
- B. I can ask _____ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- C. When leaving work, I can _____.
- D. I can try to work it out with my employer or supervisor to alternate the time I arrive and depart from work.
- E. I can obtain a cellular phone to use to help with my safety as I travel to and from work.
- F. If problems occur when driving home, I can _____.
- G. If I realize that I am being followed by batterer as I am driving, I can go to the local law enforcement station and lay on the horn for immediate assistance. If I have a cellular phone, I may want to call ahead to notify the police of my situation.
- H. If I use public transit, I can _____.
- I. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those that I used when residing with my battering partner.
- J. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my battering partner. I can make sure that the bank understands NOT to let my separated or divorces partner have access to any of my accounts.
- K. I can contact all banks and credit card services I use regarding my situation to ensure my credit safety.
- L. I can develop a code word or hand signal to warn friends and family members either to come to my aid when my batterer comes around me or to get help by calling the police or others to protect me.

M. I can also _____.

Step 6: Safety and drug or alcohol use. Many people in various different cultures use alcohol. Many use mood-altering drugs. Much of this use is legal and some is not. The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be very hard on a victim of domestic violence, may hurt the parental relationship with one's children, and put the victim at a disadvantage on other legal actions with her battering partner. Therefore, women should carefully consider the potential cost of using illegal drugs. The use of prescription drugs can also affect legal outcomes as well. **But beyond this, the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce a victim's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from the battering partner.** Furthermore, the use of alcohol or others drugs by the batterer may give her/him the excuse to use violence. Therefore, in the context of drug and alcohol use, a victim needs to make specific safety plans.

If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with the battering partner, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

- A. If I am going to use, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- B. I can also _____.
- C. If my partner is using, I can _____.
- D. I might also _____.
- E. To safeguard my children, I might _____.

Step 7: Safety and my emotional health. The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself **takes much courage and incredible energy.**

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

- A. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____.
- B. When I have to communicate with my partner, I can do so by telephone or e-mail. I can do so in a public place with other people I trust to protect or intervene on my behalf. I can also _____.
- C. I can try to use "I can ..." statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
- D. I can tell myself – " _____ "- whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- E. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.

- F. I can call _____, _____, and _____ as other resources to be of support to me.
- G. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____, _____, and _____.
- H. I can attend workshops and support groups at the community domestic violence program or _____, _____, or _____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.
- I. I can exercise, take up a sport or participate in a self-defense classes to improve my self-esteem and confidence in interacting with others.
- J. I can continue or establish new social relationships or participate in activities outside or home or work. I can go back to school or build on my education. I will not allow myself to become isolated.

Step 8: Safety measures in protecting my children. If I choose to leave my relationship with my batterer, there may be safety concerns regarding his/her access to my children. I also understand that my batterer's wanting contact with my children may be a way to come into contact with me.

Safety measures to consider include:

- A. I will consult with an attorney to legally establish clear boundaries in terms of custody and visitation rights of my children.
- B. I will give a copy of the protective order to my children's school or daycare, religious instruction teacher, babysitter, and after-school program workers to instruct these individuals, how to use this to protect my children (i.e. call the police or sheriff.)
- C. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ (friend/relative/other) in the event that my partner takes the children. I will always keep a current picture available and a set of fingerprints for each child. (Free fingerprinting is sometimes done at health fairs through the local police department.)
- D. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

_____ (school)
 _____ (day care staff)
 _____ (babysitter)
 _____ (coach)
 _____ (extracurricular activity staff member)
 _____ (religious instruction teacher)

_____ (after-school instructor) and
_____ (other) _____ (other) _____ (other).

- E. I can make use of a code word in order to protect my children. By using a code word only authorized individuals would be allowed to pick up my children. I can be sure to stress to the child not to divulge the code word to anyone else. I can request that the care-taker verify the code word and write down the driver's license of the individual picking up the child.
- F. I can enroll my children in self-defense classes that are appropriate for them or an awareness program that addresses how to deal with abusive or uncomfortable behavior from strangers, acquaintances, authority figures, friends, or family members.
- G. If my batterer is allowed to visit with my children and I am wary of his/her coming to my home, I will make other arrangements such as transporting the children to and from a neutral, public site for set visitation times. I may have another individual whom I trust to provide the transportation to reduce potential contact with my batterer.
- H. If visitation with my children by my batterer is to be supervised, I can check into supervised visitation programs to protect children such as Kids Connection or Kids Exchange.
- I. I will develop a network of people whom I trust to care for my children if my safety or their safety becomes compromised. These are people whom I would rely upon not to respect my decisions and not allow my batterer to influence them into having access to my children.
- J. I will use the last sheet of this safety plan as a guide for further development of safety measures needed to maintain the safety of my children.
- K. I can do other things to insure the safety of my children from potential danger by my batterer such as: _____

Step 9: Items to take when leaving. When victims of domestic violence leave their partners, it is important to take certain items with them. Beyond this, victims sometimes give extra copies of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case they have to leave quickly.

Items with asterisks on the following list are the most important to take. If there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the home.

These items might best be placed in one location, so that if we have to leave in a hurry, I can grab them quickly. I will keep in mind that I need not leave any of these items in areas where my partner may be tipped off to my future plan in seeking safety.

When I leave, I should take:

- * Identification for myself
- * Children's birth certificates
- * My birth certificate
- * Social Security cards
- * School and vaccination records
- * Money
- * Checkbook, ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) or debit card
- * Credit cards
- * Keys -house/car/office
- * Driver's license and registration, proof of insurance
- * Vehicle titles
- * Medications
- * Journals or diaries
- Welfare identification
- Income tax returns
- Inventory of debts and assets
- *Green card or work permits
- *Passport(s)
- Marriage license and any legal papers regarding divorce, property, child custody, etc.
- Medical records -for all family members
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- Bank books
- Insurance papers
- Small saleable objects
- Address book
- Photos and negatives
- Jewelry
- Weapons
- Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- Items of special sentimental value

Telephone numbers I need to know:

- Local police department – home _____.
- Local police department - school _____.
- Local police department – work _____.
- Domestic Violence Victims' Services Program _____.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) _____.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline {TTY} 1-800-787-3224 _____.

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 Adapted from "Personalized Safety Plan," Office of the City Attorney, San Diego, California, April, 1990
 Revise by Diana Philip and Lisa Brune, Denton County Friends of the Family (Texas), April 2005; updated 2007

Child Safety Plan

Risks Posed by Abusive Parent

Name of child and age

Date of Plan

Times the Risks Are Most Dangerous

Name/Address/Telephone of Protective Parent

Name/Address/Telephone of Abusive Parent

Community Systems to Protect the Child Are:

Community Systems Action	Protective Actions Usually Taken	Problematic Actions to be Stopped or Changed	Additional Protective Actions Desired (list at least 3)
Police			
School			
Church			
Neighbors			
Court			
Childcare			
Family			
Child/Youth Services			
Extra Curricular Activity Leader			
Other			
Other			